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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA DAS DUDDY, WHA/CAR (BENT)
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [PINR](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO "RECONFIRM" SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA'S
UNSC CANDIDACY REVEALS POSSIBLE VENEZUELAN COERCION

REF: A. STATE 86256

[¶](#)B. AMB. JOHNSON-DAS DUDDY 5/31 E-MAIL

Classified By: Ambassador Brenda LaGrange Johnson. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (S) Summary: The Ambassador met with Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller and six aides May 30 to ascertain GOJ voting intentions vis-a-vis Guatemala's bid for a non-permanent UNSC seat. The PM was unable to answer the question but said she would consult with Foreign Minister Anthony Hylton when he returned from the NAM Ministerial in Malaysia. The PM (protect), however, then asked to see the Ambassador "privately," and told her that she was concerned that Venezuela is withholding promised assistance to the GOJ pending the outcome of the UNSC membership vote. QUOTE I need your help, UNQUOTE she said, referring to the GOJ's austere budgetary situation which can only be aggravated if the PM's concerns about the GOV are correct. The Ambassador listened sympathetically but made no commitments. The PM appeared tired, even sedated, during the meeting, and was clearly uncomfortable with her brief. She appears genuinely to be concerned about GOV's intentions, even as she struggles domestically against political opponents within her own government and party as the PM attempts to prepare the PNP for upcoming elections. We have raised with the GOJ previously our concerns with President Chavez's intentions under PetroCaribe, but this is the first time a Jamaican official has admitted (to us) the possibility that Chavez could have any ulterior motives. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) Per Ref A request, the Ambassador, accompanied by P/E Couns (notetaker), met with Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller at Jamaica House on May 30. The PM was joined by Patricia Sinclair McCalla, Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM); a private secretary; Shorna Kay Richards, Bilateral Affairs Department, MFA; and several GOJ protocol representatives.

[¶](#)3. (C) The Ambassador informed the PM that she had been specifically requested to convey the importance of the UNSC vote to the USG, and of our strong support for Guatemala's bid. She asked the PM point-blank whether Jamaica intended to vote against Guatemala. The PM replied that there had been some discussion of the issue during the recent visit to Jamaica of the Malaysian PM (Ref), but acknowledged that she did not know the answer. After briefly fumbling through her briefing materials, the PM said she would check with Foreign Minister Anthony Hylton upon his return to Jamaica at the end

of the week. (Note: Hylton was in Kuala Lumpur for the recent NAM ministerial and is expected to return to Jamaica on June 3 or 4. End note.)

¶4. (S) After a brief discussion of Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) issues and the state of preparations for the 2007 Cricket World Cup (septel), the PM asked to see the Ambassador QUOTE privately UNQUOTE. They returned upstairs to her office, along with McCalla and the private secretary, and were joined there by Cabinet Secretary Carlton Davis. There the PM (protect) bluntly told the Ambassador that she suspected Venezuela was awaiting the outcome of the fall UNSC vote to ensure GOJ support, before proceeding with implementation of the PetroCaribe Agreement with the GOJ, and with other assistance to Jamaica. Simpson Miller said she had had QUOTE no contact with Chavez UNQUOTE since becoming PM, or previously. She repeated several times that QUOTE I need your help,UNQUOTE apparently meaning with budgetary issues. (Note: Former PM P.J. Patterson signed the PetroCaribe Agreement with Venezuela, but, according to Simpson Miller, there has been no progress on it since she took office. Cabinet Secretary Davis also stated that Jamaica's energy prices have quadrupled in recent years. GOJ resource constraints are an important part of why the Ambassador has repeatedly stressed the flexibility of MCA funding should Jamaica qualify.)

¶5. (S) Comment: The Ambassador listened carefully and sympathetically to the PM but made no commitments. She was left with the strong impression that the PM is under a great deal of stress, is genuinely concerned about GOV intentions, and unfamiliar with key issues, and is uncertain about whom to trust within her government. Having become PM through an internal PNP election, and without having secured her own mandate through a general election (due by October 2007), The PM appears to believe) probably with justification) that

she is being actively or passively undermined by PNP rivals. Interestingly, on June 2, a Jamaican political analyst told a morning radio audience that backers of National Security Minister Peter Phillips (whom Simpson Miller defeated in the internal PNP election on February 25) are adopting QUOTE passive resistance UNQUOTE to Simpson Miller as the party prepares itself for local elections. Also of note, the PM seemed extremely fatigued throughout the May 30 meetings, almost as if she had been sedated. She told the Ambassador that she would be in Washington on June 10 for meetings with the IDB. As of mid-afternoon on June 2, the Ambassador is to see the PM and FM on June 5 to continue the Guatemala/UNSC conversation.

¶6. (S) Comment (cont'd): In terms of what all of this means, we need to begin thinking about whether and/or how to engage the PM more closely. How well founded are her concerns vis-a-vis the Venezuelans and her PNP rivals? Is there anything we can do? Should we do it? Simpson Miller's concerns about Venezuelan intentions track with those we raised with the GOJ about PetroCaribe beginning in 2005, but the Agreement was concluded under Patterson, who strenuously denied that the Agreement would make the GOJ susceptible to just this type of pressure from the GOV.

JOHNSON